

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 3079

As Reported by House Committee On:

Health Care
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to health care services.

Brief Description: Reporting on the employment status of recipients of medicaid and the basic health plan.

Sponsors: Representatives Conway, Cody, Sells, Dickerson, Morrell, Simpson, Schual-Berke, Hasegawa, Chase and Santos.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 1/31/06, 2/2/06 [DP];

Appropriations: 2/4/06 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- The Health Care Authority and the Department of Social and Health Services will submit a report to the Legislature on the employment status of enrollees of the Basic Health Plan and Medicaid.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Campbell, Vice Chair; Morrell, Vice Chair; Hinkle, Ranking Minority Member; Curtis, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Clibborn, Condotta, Green, Lantz, Moeller and Schual-Berke.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Alexander and Bailey.

Staff: Dave Knutson (786-7146).

Background:

The Legislature has expanded Medicaid eligibility and established the Basic Health Plan (Plan) to provide health care coverage for low income working families. There is limited information collected on the employers of low income workers who enroll in Medicaid and the Plan.

Summary of Bill:

The Health Care Authority and the Department of Social and Health Services will submit a report to the Legislature on the employment status of enrollees of the Plan and Medicaid.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 31, 2006.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This information should be collected so we know why and for how long low income employees are receiving benefits from these public programs.

(With concerns) Gathering this information on small employers might jeopardize the identities of their employees.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Conway, prime sponsor; David West, Center for a Changing Workforce; and Steve Gano, Wal-Mart.

(With concerns) Gary Smith, Independent Business Association; and Roger Gantz, Department of Social and Health Services.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 30 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Fromhold, Vice Chair; Alexander, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; McDonald, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Armstrong, Bailey, Buri, Chandler, Clements, Cody, Conway, Darneille, Dunshee, Grant, Haigh, Hinkle, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Linville, McDermott, Miloscia, Pearson, Priest, Schual-Berke, P. Sullivan, Talcott and Walsh.

Staff: David Pringle (786-7310).

Summary of Recommendation of Committee On Appropriations Compared to Recommendation of Committee On Health Care:

The Appropriations Committee substitute bill requires the reports on Basic Health Plan and Medical Assistance enrollees to include the number of employees that were receiving any governmental assistance prior to being employed, and the length of time the employee has

been employed. A null and void clause was added, conditioning the effect of the bill on being specifically referenced in the Omnibus Operating Budget Act by June 30, 2006.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Testimony For: We supported last year's version of this bill, and support this year's version too. About one-half of the story is being told about this subject in the media, and we would like a thorough, transparent study to clear up misperceptions. We employ a lot of transitional employees who are leaving state assistance, providing a service to the state just as the state is also providing a service to us.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Steve Gano, Wal-Mart.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.